



MEETING MINUTES
USA National Karate-do Federation Board of Directors Meeting
May 6, 2026, 10:00am Central time in Park Ridge, IL

Board Members in-person Attendance

Elisa Au
Sasha Gerritson
Pat Hickey
Brian Hilliard
Safin Kasturi
Tom Scott

Board Members in virtual Attendance

Mike Donadio
Angel Johnson
Todd Meyers
Senthil Thiyagarajan

Staff in-person Attendance

Michael Cain
Brody Burns

Call to Order

Elisa Au called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. CT.

Open Session

1. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

- a. The Board discussed the process for documenting standing conflicts of interest and the requirement to declare any conflicts specific to the meeting agenda.

2. January 22, 2026 Meeting Minutes

- a. Elisa Au motioned to approve the January 22, 2026 Board meeting minutes, seconded by Angel Johnson.
- b. Motion approved: Votes in favor = 8; Opposed = 0; Abstained = 0.

3. Board and International Updates

- a. Elisa Au reported that the National Team Trials were conducted successfully and that the USA National Team was selected for the current competition year. The Board noted a decline in the number of athletes participating in the event and discussed the importance of continuing to monitor participation trends.
- b. The Board reviewed the USA Open and Junior International Cup. The event provided a positive experience for youth athletes and included expanded education and development opportunities for coaches.
- c. International participation at the event declined compared with the prior year. The Board discussed increased competition from WKF ranking events and the importance of event location, timing, and positioning when seeking international participation.
- d. Ms. Au provided an update on recent international results and upcoming events, including the North American Cup, which will serve as a qualification event for the Pan American Games.

4. CEO and Organizational Updates

- a. Michael Cain reported that the organization remains financially stable and has maintained its reserve funds. The USA Open was financially successful, with additional hotel rebates and Texas event trust fund proceeds still pending.





- b.** USA Karate reached an agreement in principle to return the USA Open and Junior International Cup to Las Vegas in 2027. The event is planned for May 4–9, 2027, at the Westgate Resort, subject to final execution of the contract.
 - c.** The Board reviewed the USA Open After-Action Report. Staff explained that recommendations are reviewed during regular operational meetings and implemented when appropriate and financially feasible.
 - d.** USA Karate completed the primary portion of its USOPC audit. The organization satisfied 42 of the 50 criteria reviewed, with the remaining items primarily involving administrative documentation, athlete representation, and alignment between written policies and current practices. The final audit report will be shared with the Board when received.
- 5. Operations and Membership Update**
 - a.** Brody Burns presented an overview of organizational growth since 2022, including the regional structure, national coaching staff, referee development program, sanctioned events, national qualifiers, and revised membership structure.
 - b.** The number of regional and national training opportunities has increased substantially. Referee certification courses have also expanded, providing additional development opportunities and helping support staffing needs at national events.
 - c.** USA Karate has 21 sanctioned events and 13 National Qualifiers scheduled in 2026. Staff will continue working to expand qualifiers into underserved regions while strengthening quality and safety standards for sanctioned events.
 - d.** Membership has continued to grow, including strong growth in Level 2 members who participate primarily at the local and regional levels. Staff projects total membership of approximately 4,200 to 4,400 by the end of 2026.
 - e.** The new Club Membership Program launched May 1, 2026. Staff is also developing a regional championship concept that may create additional competition opportunities and provide funding for regional development.
 - f.** The Board discussed member retention, potential exit surveys for individuals who do not renew, event-location strategy, and opportunities to increase engagement among specific age groups.
- 6. Fundraising Update**
 - a.** Sasha Gerritson reported that USA Karate has received \$52,000 in unrestricted philanthropic donations, representing approximately 45% of the organization's \$115,000 annual fundraising goal.
 - b.** USA Karate also received a donation of 12 laptops to support livestreaming at the National Championships.
- 7. Collegiate Program Task Force**
 - a.** David Rosenberg reported that the task force has begun outreach to collegiate karate clubs, including the University of Pennsylvania and affiliated organizations.
 - b.** Initial discussions identified funding, scholarships, liability and safeguarding requirements, access to qualified instructors, and student engagement as key considerations.
 - c.** The task force will continue gathering information and will provide recommendations regarding collegiate programming and a potential collegiate club membership category.

Open Session concluded at approximately 11:45 a.m. CT. Following a brief break and Board discussion, Closed Session began at approximately 12:07 p.m. CT.



Member, United States
Olympic & Paralympic Committee



Closed Session

8. The Board discussed governance and committee structure, including committee responsibilities, athlete representation, the distinction between operational and Board functions, and alignment with USOPC requirements.
9. The Board discussed ethics, complaint, disciplinary, and appeal procedures. Staff and legal counsel will review the applicable policies and present recommended revisions at a future meeting.
10. Elisa Au motioned to appoint Brian Mertel as a member of the Nominating and Governance Committee and Vince Koehle as Chair of the committee, seconded by Tom Scott.
 - a. Motion approved: Votes in favor = 8; Opposed = 0; Abstained = 1.
11. The Board discussed potentially dissolving the Coaches Committee and transferring its remaining oversight and education responsibilities to the Technical Committee and operational coaching structure. Staff will revise the applicable committee policies and return them to the Board for approval.
12. The Board reviewed USA Karate's mission, values, strategic priorities, financial sustainability, reserve goals, fundraising strategy, sponsorship opportunities, and long-term revenue development.
13. Ms. Au motioned to add Sasha Gerritson and Safin Kasturi to the Audit Committee, joining current member Todd Meyers. The motion was seconded by Tom Scott.
 - a. Motion approved: Votes in favor = 8; Opposed = 0; Abstained = 1.

The Board moved into Executive Session at approximately 4:25 p.m. CT.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:55p.m. CT.

Previously Approved Items Since the January 22, 2026 Meeting

None